

News Release

Kansas Farm Service Agency
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FSA STATE REVIEW BEGINS

(Manhattan, Kansas, March 3, 2006) --- Bill R. Fuller, State Executive Director of the Kansas USDA Farm Service Agency, announced today that he is initiating a review of the Kansas FSA operation.

FSA Administrator Teresa Lasseter has asked each State Executive Director to conduct an independent local-level review of the efficiency and effectiveness of FSA offices to identify the optimum network of facilities, staffing, training, and technology within existing budgetary resources and staffing ceilings. "Service to farmers and ranchers continues to be the highest priority," said Fuller. "Operating within existing budgetary resources and staffing ceilings is a reality."

Unlike the ill-fated FSA Tomorrow national initiative unveiled last September that was quickly abandoned, this review is to be state driven. There is no comprehensive national plan or formula. "Kansans deciding what is best for Kansas – a refreshing concept and what a great opportunity," declared Fuller.

As the first step, Fuller has scheduled three FSA Stakeholder Listening Sessions across the state:

- **March 28**, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., **Garden City**, Plaza Inn (North Ballroom)
- **March 29**, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., **Great Bend**, Barton County Community College (Auditorium)
- **March 30**, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m., **Topeka**, Kansas Museum of History

Nationally, the agency has 2,351 county offices across the country. More than 400 of these offices now have two or fewer full-time staff. Nearly 500 offices are within 20 miles of the next nearest office. The cost of delivering services varies widely, ranging from less than 1 cent per dollar of program benefits to more than \$2 in expenses for every dollar of benefits delivered.

At the listening sessions, producers, farm organizations, commodity groups, policy makers, community leaders will receive information on FSA programs, structure, and challenges. Most important, the bulk of the time will be allocated to listening to stakeholders outline their expectations and present recommendations.

Later, the process will include study by a Review Committee and the development of a Kansas Plan. If the state developed plan recommends closure or consolidation, a public hearing will be held in the county in which the affected FSA Office is located.

Stakeholders that cannot attend one of the listening sessions, but want to express their ideas and recommendations may send comments by e-mail to state_review@ks.usda.gov, or mail to Kansas FSA State Office, 3600 Anderson Avenue, Manhattan, Kansas 66503.

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